



Type: Magazine Article

Book of Mormon Evidence

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Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 89, No. 10 (10 March 1927)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 150–151, 157–158

Abstract: In this article, recent scientific research is used to establish facts mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The use of steel in the Book of Mormon is supported by recent findings of hardened tools and steel implements in ancient American ruins.

day associates in the home. You know many wives forget ever to say a word of praise or encouragement to their overworked husbands. If men do ill, or neglect us, we hurry to tell them so, frankly and fully. But if they offer a bit of help in our housework, or when they are dressed up for church and we note their clean, gentlemanly appearance, we keep still and say nothing. We are so stingy with our encouragement.

When you go out teaching in the good old-fashioned way, you dear old-fashioned sisters, you just carry with you a few encouraging words; for instance, notice the flowers in the window, the healthy-looking children, the clean home, the excellent cooking, the faithful attendance at meeting, the inspiring testimony given by the husband or wife at the last fast meeting; and above all, carry with you all the "trade-lasts", as the children call them, you have heard about your hostesses' children. We would rather hear good things about our husbands and children than about ourselves. Then, pass on such words of encouragement as you go from door to door.

Above all remember there is vitality, a principle of life, in the very speech that we utter when talking on any of the principles of the Gospel. A word of testimony, a reference to fulfilment of prophecy, a faith-promoting incident, an assurance that the Lord notices and rewards our faithfulness in our home and Relief Society duties—all these fall on the tired spirit and burdened soul of a mother like the precious "dew upon Mount Hermon." Garnish your visits with such pearls of wisdom and sympathy, dear Relief Society teachers, and you will be loved and welcomed in every home you visit.—Editorial in Vol. 8, *Relief Society Magazine*.

BOOK OF MORMON EVIDENCE

ELDER JANNE M. SJODAHL

THIS YEAR is a centennial year in the history of the Church; for it was on September 22, 1827, that the Prophet Joseph Smith received the plates of the Book of Mormon at the hands of the Angel Moroni. That was an event to be remembered now, preparatory to the great centennial in 1930, in memory of the organization of the Church.

The Book of Mormon is the most remarkable book in existence. It is a literary miracle from whatever view it is regarded. Since its appearance it has been assailed from all directions. It has been declared forged or spurious as to authorship; it has been pronounced a piece of plagiarism as to its contents; it has been ridiculed as imperfect with regard to composition, style and grammar. And yet the promise it contains that the Lord, through His Spirit, would manifest the truth of it to every sin-

cere inquirer has been fulfilled in hundreds of cases, in all countries, in many languages. In the entire history of the world there is no exact parallel to the Book of Mormon.

Comparatively little has been said against the doctrines of the book. Even the critics realize that they are the doctrines of the Bible, and they cannot, of course, be true in the Bible and false in the Book of Mormon. But the attacks have been directed against its history. The assertion has been made, over and over again, that archæology does not corroborate but refutes that history in every particular.

That is a question which the average reader of the sacred record has, perhaps, no means of entering into thoroughly for himself. He must rely entirely on the testimony of others. The marvelous discoveries of the last few decades in the field of American archæology are, however, as evidence considered, so different to what was known previously as to make even the experts sit up and take notice.

A case in point, as an illustration of this assertion, is the discovery of a steel tool among the ruins of a prehistoric city in Panama. The Book of Mormon relates that King Shule, who was "mighty in judgment" as well as physical strength, won a war against his brother, by means of his superior arms, he having discovered a method of making steel swords. (Ether 7:9.) Jarom tells us that the Nephites also had steel tools. (Jarom 1:8.) Hitherto the experts have generally held that the prehistoric Americans did not know the use of iron or steel. Mr. John Fiske in his admirable account of the Discovery of America (Vol. 1, page 31) makes the sweeping statement that "a knowledge of smelting iron was never reached in aboriginal America." Critics have seized upon such dicta and tried to discount the Book Mormon.

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THE SCOPE OF THE RELIEF SOCIETY

WHO CAN MEASURE the heights of love, the breadth of charity, or sound the depths of knowledge? He only who created the universe. And He alone may compute the majesty and the power of the Society which was established in Nanvoo, March 17th, 1842. The scope of our work, the possibilities of our development, are bounded only by woman's capacities and woman's eventualities. The Relief Society is as broad as eternity, as far reaching as love. Any woman of excellent character may achieve membership in the Society. All that is true, all that is beautiful, all hope, faith and mercy are enclosed within its boundaries.—
SUSA YOUNG GATES.

"AND NOW abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Corinthians 13: 13.

ing address replete with lofty precept and vivid illustrations. While Latter-day Saints in no wise discredit the good accomplished by any organization framed and established as a result of the enterprise and initiative of man, whether it be called a society, an association, or religious body, we solemnly affirm on the basis of reason and scripture that there can be and is only one Church that can be authoritatively called the Church of Christ. To put forth the conception that there can be more than one is to set at naught the teachings of the Saviour and to disregard both the letter and spirit of scripture. The Church accords unbounded toleration to the beliefs of any religious organization, and fully recognizes that no good act will ever fail of reward; but we proclaim to the world that the requirements for entrance into the kingdom of God are as of old: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, whole-souled repentance for sin, baptism by immersion by one holding authority, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. As to whether or not this Church is the Church of Christ, the fruits of "Mormonism" give glorious answer; but to those who doubt, the earnest invitation is extended to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, "Come and see."

A good account of the conference appeared in the *Blackburn Telegraph* of February 28th.

KENNETH A. NIELSON, Conference Clerk

BOOK OF MORMON EVIDENCE

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STEEL TOOLS FOUND

But now comes A. Hyatt Verrill, a veteran explorer for the Museum of the American Indian, and asserts that steel implements were known and used in America by the prehistoric race. An account of his recent marvelous discoveries in the wilds of Panama appears in the January issue of the *World's Work*. He has found, he says, the ruins of a mighty city, with, at one time in the long ago, a teeming population. He found sculptured pillars, some of which were seventeen feet long and nearly three feet in diameter, rivaling, it seems, in perfection of form and design some of the monuments of the ancient cities of the Mayas. On these pillars he found marks of chisels, not the irregular indentations made by pecking with a stone hammer, but clearly cut, delicate lines, evidently the work of hardened metal tools. And, as if to remove all doubt, less than two years ago he found, at a depth of five and a half feet below the surface, among broken pottery and embedded in charcoal, a steel implement, a piece of real hardened iron. Most of it had been destroyed by

corrosion, but the chisel-shaped edge was there, and it is, Mr. Verrill states, "so hard that it is scarcely touched by a file, and will scratch glass."

If this account is in accordance with facts, and there is no reason to doubt this, we have been given as a New Year's gift this centennial year of the Book of Mormon, an item of external evidence of the truth and of the divine origin of that book, the importance of which we may not even be able to grasp in a moment. And I believe more similar evidence will be found as the explorations proceed.

There are problems to the solution of which archæology offers no sure guide. But there are, on the other hand, some points which may be considered established beyond a doubt, by scientific research. Among these are the following :

1. That the Indians are *one race*—the American race—and not many races.

2. That in the culture of that one race several elements are discernible, and that East-Asiatic, Semitic and Egyptian are among these.

3. That the traditions point to an early exodus from the Old World, and then to numerous migrations from north, south, east and west, of families, of tribes, or several tribes united; the cause of the migrations being, sometimes to escape a conquering enemy, sometimes to find new hunting grounds.

4. That some of the aborigines were highly civilized, and that many of their great cities and buildings were destroyed by seismic disturbances and volcanic eruptions.

On all these points there is, I believe, general agreement; and it seems to me that they are in perfect agreement with the main outlines of the history of the Book of Mormon.

American archæology and ethnology have by no means said all there is to say on those subjects. But the scientists are diligently and conscientiously striving to find all the truth buried under the accumulated dust of ages. And their research is bearing fruit.

May I not suggest that we, as Latter-day Saints, read and re-read the Book of Mormon with some of the diligence scientists are manifesting in their research? It may be necessary to do so in order to find out just what the sacred volume really does say, and does not say, on the history of ancient America.

When the scientists interpret their facts correctly, and we understand the Book of Mormon correctly, the perfect agreement between that record and archæology will appear so clearly that he who runs may read. And for that reason I say that the Book of Mormon is a miracle of literature. There is no other way of accounting for its existence.

HE WHO SADDENS at the thought of idleness cannot be idle.